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ABSTRACT

Experienced Based Career Education has produced positive evidence of effectiveness. Two points can be made about effectiveness and educational innovation. First, evidence of effectiveness is but one of several criteria used by educational decision makers for determining educational change. Second, only a small percentage of educators are particularly attracted to change and innovation. Within this perspective, an examination of the nature and present status of career education may be helpful to decision makers interested in Experienced Based Career Education. Working toward "education as preparation for work," career education has the following parameters: (1) based on career development; (2) needed by and applicable to all children; (3) not an attempt to demean other educational goals; (4) delivered by infusion; (5) needs community involvement; (6) does not seek increased budgets. Since 1971 career education has been introduced into more than 9,000 of the 16,000 K-12 school districts in the nation and has gained wide acceptance. During this same period, Experienced Based Career Education first operated as an alternative delivery mechanism and later as an effort independent of the mainstream of career education. The following four major strategies can be considered by Experienced Based Career Education advocates: (A) compete with career education, (B) add experienced based career education to the total effort of career education, (C) become a champion of experience based education, dropping the word "career," (D) become a methodology for educational change. In the future, one of these or other alternatives must be chosen. (JH)

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THOUGHTS ON EBCE AND CAREER EDUCATION

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Introduction

Each of the four major models for Experienced Based Career Education has produced positive evidence of effectiveness. Such results are apparent when one looks at evidence of student enthusiasm, acceptance by the business/labor industry community, hard data relative to progress of participants toward career maturity, or increases in basic academic achievement of participants. On all of these counts, the four EBCE models have demonstrated themselves to be effective mechanisms. I salute both this record of accomplishment and the willingness of those responsible for the EBCE effort to amass it.

If evidence of actual effectiveness were the sole criterion used for determining educational change, American Education would undoubtedly have a quite different history. That is, some innovations with unquestioned effectiveness have been discarded while others, whose evidence of effectiveness is either lacking or of questionable validity, have gained strength and acceptance. This has occurred because educational decision makers must use evidence of effectiveness as only one of a number of criteria to be considered when making judgments. In addition to this criterion, educational decision makers must also utilize such criteria as (a) cost effectiveness; (b) ease of implementation; (c) internal resistance to change existing among educators; and (d) external resistance to change existing within the broader community. The worth, or lack of worth, of a particular form of educational innovation is necessarily only one of a series of criteria used.

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A second preliminary point regarding educational innovation would also seem to be in order. In general, it seems safe to say that, within the "family" of professional educators, a small percentage exist who are particularly attracted to the notion of educational change and innovation. Such persons, in addition to their interests in innovation, possess two other special characteristics: (a) they know how to write proposals that will get funded with Federal grant money; and (b) they know how to produce positive results in their projects. They have not typically known how to use their results to motivate the great majority of educators - i.e., those to whom educational innovation and change do not have positive appeal - to buy their results and so to change in the indicated direction. When change fails to occur, those who could be called the "true educational innovators" typically move on to a new form of innovation and begin again. This, too, is part of the history of American Education.

It is within the framework of these two historical perspectives that I would like to speak here. In order to say with the greatest possible clarity what I would like to convey, I have divided these remarks into two parts. First, I would like to present a brief picture of career education - its nature and current status. Second, I would like to present four alternatives for consideration by those currently working in Experienced Based Career Education. I do so in hope that this form of presentation will be helpful to you in decisions you are attempting to make at this conference.

Career Education: Its Nature and Present Status

Nature

Career education can be pictured as an attempt to change American Education in

ways that bring a more appropriate emphasis to the goal of "education as preparation for work" among the several basic goals of education. The generic nature of the kind of educational change being championed by career education can be outlined quite independently of its content. Among its bedrock parameters, the following are especially crucial to this discussion:

1. Career education is conceptualized and organized around the theory and research of career development. Thus, it is pictured as an effort that begins in the pre-school years and continues throughout most of the life span. It thus fits into the concept of lifelong learning.
2. Career education is pictured as an effort that is needed by and applicable to all of the children of all of the people. It is, in no way, intended to serve only a special segment of the student population.
3. Career education is an attempt to bring a proper focus to the goal of "education as preparation for work" in ways that neither demean nor detract from any other worthy basic goal of American Education.
4. Career education's prime delivery mechanism within the formal school system is infusion. It seeks to establish no new courses, curricula, or alternative school structure. It seeks to create internal change within existing educational personnel, but it does not seek to add new kinds of educational personnel at the building level. It is a "people change", rather than a "program add-on" approach to educational innovation. It places basic trust in currently employed educators and curricula. It depends on existing programs but does not seek to add yet another.

5. A second facet of career education's delivery system is the concept of collaboration between the school system and the broader community - including both the business/labor/industry/professional/government community and the home/family structure. A bedrock tenet of career education holds that career education is not something schools can do by themselves - that it must become, both in terms of actions and in terms of accountability, a community effort, not just a school effort. Thus, in addition to direct joint school/community interaction career education also supports other community efforts to help youth in career exploration and decision making as part of the career education concept.
6. Finally, career education is an approach to educational change that seeks to increase educational productivity without substantially increasing the educational budget. It asks school systems to re-allocate the way they spend currently available dollars instead of asking the community to support increased per-pupil costs for education. The primary costs of career education are pictured as those involved in providing: (a) inservice education to currently employed educators; and (b) career education coordinators at the school district/community level - but <u>not</u> at the building level.

<u>Current Status</u>

Since formally coming into existence in 1971, the career education concept has been introduced into more than 9,000 of the 16,000+ K-12 school districts in this nation. In the last few years, it has also become increaingly popular in a wide variety of postsecondary education settings ranging all the way from community colleges, to four year colleges and universities, and even into adult education efforts. During this same period of time, it has been endorsed

by such groups of major educational decision makers as: (a) the Council of Chief State School Officers; (b) the National School Boards Association; (c) the American Association of School Administrators; (d) The National Association of Secondary School Principals; and (e) The National Association of State Boards of Education.

Among practitioners within the education system, career education has been endorsed by such diverse groups as: (a) the American Personnel and Guidance Association; (b) the American Vocational Association; (c) the National Education Association; (d) the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; (e) The National Council of Social Studies; (f) the American Industrial Arts Association; and (g) the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language, as well as others. It has also been endorsed by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Within the broader community, career education has been endorsed by such groups as: (a) the Chamber of Commerce of the USA; (b) United Autoworkers of America; (c) United Rubber, Plastics, Linoleum, and Cork Workers of America; (d) National Federation of Independent Businessmen; (e) American Legion; (f) Boy Scouts of the USA; and (g) Women's American ORT.

The number and variety of endorsements career education has received exceeds its record of hard evidence demonstrating its effectiveness. While many preliminary indications of effectiveness exist, there is no way that career education, as a total movement, could be said to have complied anywhere near as effective a record of effectiveness as has Experienced Based Career Education. There is no doubt about that.

To some, the "bottom line" with regard to the current status of career education is seen in the recent signing into law of P.L. 95-207 - THE CAREER EDUCATION

INCENTIVE ACT OF 1977 - by President Carter. The Congress and the President, by this legislative action, have demonstrated their support and endorsement of the career education concept. To others more skeptical, passage of P.L. 95-207 is the "next to the bottom line" with the real "bottom line" to be decided by actions of the 95th Congress with respect to appropriations for this new law. As you know, such decisions have yet to be made.

Thus, while career education's record of demonstrated effectiveness is still modest, its record with respect to acceptance of basic nature and goals is quite impressive. It would, I think, be difficult to justify an assertion that there has been little interest in, enthusiasm for, or acceptance of the career education concept. Its marketing strategies, at least to date, have been successful.

During this same period, Experienced Based Career Education has operated, first, as an alternative delivery mechanism of career education and, during the last few years, as an effort independent of the mainstream of career education. If is with this kind of background that I would now like to turn to what seem to me to represent current major available strategies for Experienced Based Career Education to consider in relation to the career education concept as a whole.

Strategies For Consideration By EBCE

Since establishment of OE's Office of Career Education in 1974, Experienced Based Career Education has operated completely apart from OCE. It still does. Rather than continue to ignore this fact, it seems to me the time has come to consider some alternative strategies for EBCE to consider vis-a-vis its possible relationships to career education. Four basic strategies appear to me to be available, each of which deserves brief discussion.

Strategy A: Compete With Career Education

One obvious strategy available to EBCE is to embark on an ambitious campaign to compete with career education as an approach to educational change. Certainly, the impressive record of EBCE effectiveness provides a powerful base for use by those wishing to adopt this strategy. Such a campaign would logically begin by emphasizing the relative advantages of EBCE over traditional career education in terms of research and evaluation evidence. The record already exists.

To adopt such a strategy would, of course, demand that EBCE simultaneously seek to emphasize the differences between itself and traditional career education in a clear and forceful manner. While the four existing EBCE models differ somewhat, it would not seem difficult to claim that the EBCE approach - with the possible slight exception of the RBS model - is one carrying the following basic assumptions:

1. EBCE is best thought of as an alternative curriculum, if not an alternative school, approach to educational change.
2. EBCE is an approach that is to be considered appropriate for the secondary school, but not the elementary school setting.
3. EBCE is an approach that is designed to appeal to some, but not all, of the student body.
4. EBCE is an approach that seeks to place major responsibility for acquisition of academic skills on the broader community with classroom teachers best viewed as learning facilitators.
5. EBCE is an approach that calls for the presence of new kinds of educational specialists at the building level.

In each of these ways, EBCE could be clearly pictured as resting on a different conceptual base than traditional career education. EBCE proponents can, of course, be expected to delete some of the differences I have outlined here and may well choose to emphasize others. That is not the point. Rather, the essential action required is to clearly state and emphasize the differences between EBCE and traditional career education. If competition is to be the "name of the game", this kind of effort will be essential. The goal, of course, would be to encourage educational decision makers and members of the broader community to endorse EBCE over traditional career education. It is certainly a strategy that is readily available and well worth serious consideration.

Strategy B: Add EBCE To The Total Career Education Effort

A second currently available strategy is to embark on a campaign aimed at convincing educational decision makers that a program of EBCE should be added to existing school programs so that the concept of career education can be effectively implemented.

The rationale appropriate for use here is simple and straightforward. It builds on recognizing the fact that career education's implementation is already heavily dependent on a number of kinds of educational programs that receive no direct career education dollars. Such programs include vocational education, cooperative education, and work experience education in addition to the variety of academic education programs. In combination, such existing educational programs supposedly meet the educational needs of all students. Career education efforts are being infused into all of these programs, but the programs themselves are not supported by career education funds.

EBCE advocates might easily make the claim that, for some students, yet another kind of educational program - namely, EBCE - is needed. The evidence of fairly large numbers of youth who are "turned off" by existing educational programs is solid and impressive. It could effectively be argued that school boards and taxpayers should invest in one more program to meet the needs of such students. If this idea could be sold, it would be obviously easy to demonstrate how this new kind of educational program makes sizeable and substantial contributions to implementation of the career education concept. There is no doubt but that this is already being demonstrated in those school systems who have moved to add an EBCE program to their currently existing career education efforts. Several such school systems are represented in this audience.

The primary difficulty with this approach is that it does involve asking for substantial increases in the education budget. Whether or not this idea can be readily marketed in these times is open to question. Still, logically, this is certainly a viable alternative for EBCE advocates to consider.

Strategy C: Become A Champion Of Experienced Based Education

A third immediately available strategy for EBCE to consider would demand only that the word "career" be dropped from its title; i.e., instead of being known as "experienced based career education", attempt to be known as "experienced based education".

Operationally, as I read the EBCE literature, this is the general direction in which EBCE appears to be headed. That is, when critics raise, as an objection to EBCE, the claim that EBCE emphasizes only the goal of "education as preparation for work", EBCE advocates quickly point out that this simply is not true. On the

contrary, they say, the EBCE approach encompasses all of the basic goals of American Education including such goals as academic achievement, wise use of leisure time, citizenship, and cultural appreciation in addition to the goal of education as preparation for work. Such assertions are, of course, necessary in order to justify the EBCE process that calls for participating students to spend a majority of their time in learning experiences outside of traditional classes taught by traditional teachers.

Viewed in this way, EBCE becomes a true educational revolution as opposed to the more evolutionary nature of traditional career education. The research basis justifying a radically different approach to learning for certain segments of the student body is easily justified both by the general domain of experiential learning and by the obvious fact that some students do not profit greatly from the traditional teaching/learning process.

If this strategy for institutionalizing the EBCE concept were to be adopted, EBCE advocates would surely have to advocate making alternative curricula, if not actual alternative schools, available for choice by students. If this notion could be sold initially to educational decision makers, its long run success would, of course, be determined by the number and kinds of students who choose this learning approach over others available to them. As I read the EBCE literature and think about high school students, it seems to me it would appeal to many. It may well be the best of all possible strategies to adopt.

The major difficulties such a strategy would encounter, it seems to me, would lie in: (a) its revolutionary nature; and (b) the perceived - even if not real -

threat it poses to many of today's classroom teachers. Such difficulties are not insurmountable, but they are real and must be faced.

Strategy D: Become An Educational Methodology

Traditional career education, as you know, is properly viewed more as a methodology for educational change than as a new kind of program, course, or curriculum. It is possible that EBCE might choose to adopt a strategy leading toward joining with traditional career education as an educational methodology.

To do this, of course, would demand that EBCE consider and emphasize ways of infusing its approaches into the regular classroom in ways that allow the total teaching/learning process to extend beyond the walls of the classroom. This, obviously, is what traditional career education has done. To adopt this strategy would demand that EBCE advocates seek to share the knowledge, expertise, and materials they have amassed over the last several years with persons now engaged in traditional career education. A wide variety of ideas, materials, and approaches to interacting with the broader community have been developed by EBCE advocates which, if made a part of traditional career education, hold high promise for increasing its effectiveness. Not all of the current cognitive content of EBCE could be made a part of traditional career education in view of the fact that some of this content stands in opposition to basic career education concepts. This does not mean that such content need be lost; i.e., it can certainly become a very valuable part of the more generic area known as experiential learning.

The obvious large disadvantage inherent in adopting this strategy is that it would lead to disappearance of EBCE as a separate entity in its own right.

Instead, EBCE would be remembered primarily as an effort that helped to build the content and increase the effectiveness of the career education movement. There is little point trying to pretend otherwise.

Concluding Remarks

The four strategies I have presented here need not, obviously, be considered as the only ones available to EBCE advocates at the present time. Various combinations and permutations of these four strategies are possible and other completely different strategies may well be developed. I would suspect that, among current EBCE "crusaders", some may well be found who would embrace each of the basic strategies outlined here. That is as it should be.

For my part, I do not pretend - nor contend - that one of these strategies is wiser or more desirable than any of the others. In my view, they are, at present, equally viable and defensible strategies to consider. Obviously, I, as a career education advocate, would hope that the fourth may appeal to most EBCE advocates more than the other three - but that is a hope, not an assumption. In the long run, the strategy - or strategies - adopted by EBCE advocates to institutionalize the knowledge accumulated by the EBCE effort over the last several years must be chosen by each of you who, today, regard yourselves as active participants in the EBCE "crusade". No one, I hope, would want it to be otherwise.